



Linkages to Learning, a Collaborative School-based Partnership among the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Montgomery County Public Schools, Public and Nonprofit Agencies, Families and Communities

Linkages Mothers Day Connects Moms

On a sunny Wednesday the week after Mother's Day, fifty mothers and their pre-school children from Linkages' Gaithersburg and Germantown school communities celebrated a very special Mother's Day picnic in Black Hills Regional Park.

Ibrayina Aldana, site coordinator and case manager at Fox Chapel ES, had piloted the program last year with Family Services Agency's parent specialist, Myrta Molina. Molina once again helped sponsor and organize a host of fun and educational activities for the group. Aldana planned the event with her Linkages colleagues from GUIDE, who believed the day would connect the children and moms while recognizing the many rewards and challenges of motherhood.



Catching bubbles is always fun!

Aldana credits colleagues Alcira Colon, Alexandra Cuadra, Patti Rodriguez, Luz Lambert, and Xiomara Pacheco for making the day-long event fun for all. "The Linkages staff members I work closely with were very enthusiastic, and by dividing up the planning, it was not too overwhelming for any one person," said Aldana.

"Thanks to Myrta and my co-workers, we had healthy food, play mats for the babies and games for everyone, including piñatas. We even had one for the moms. The moms "won" prizes and each child received a special book. Every mother was individually recognized with a poem, a certificate and a flower," noted Aldana.

"Everyone was having such a good time, it was hard to leave. Even our clown stayed almost twice as long as we expected!" said Aldana.



Two of Linkages moms play together.

Group photo, p. 11

"Life is a Journey" at Linkages Mothers Retreats

Sixty three Linkages to Learning mothers from 14 school communities came together this spring at Loyola College's Rising Phoenix Retreat Center, reflecting on past experiences and setting new goals for themselves and their families.

Linkages Mothers Retreats started five years ago through a partnership with Linkages at Highland ES and Rising Phoenix founder Margee Iddings. Initially made possible through Simple Abundance Charitable Grant from author Sara Ban Breathnach, the retreats are now funded entirely by



(L to R) A Linkages mom with facilitator Norma Jennings.

community contributions, most notably, from the Linkages to Learning Mothers Empowerment Tea, our annual fund and friend-raiser.

For many participants active in Linkages mothers groups, attending a Retreat marks the end of a year of working together and helping one another cope with many challenges. It also offers opportunities for the women to make new friendships as they mix with mothers from surrounding school communities. *(continues on p. 6)*

Inside this Issue:

| | |
|--|-------|
| Tobacco Free Tweens | 2 |
| Lions Club Eye Clinic | 2 |
| Bridging Culture through Yoga | 3 |
| Food, Fitness and Fun | 3 |
| Borders Hosts First Book Event | 4 |
| Building Resiliency Through the Arts | 5 |
| LHI Sponsors Asthma Prevention Project | 6 |
| 4th Annual Mothers Empowerment Tea | 7-9 |
| Reflections on Linkages | 9 |
| Community Donors | 10-11 |
| Staff News | 11 |

Linkages Youth Stamp Out Tobacco at 3 Middle Schools

Funded by grants to Community Health Consulting through Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Cancer and Tobacco Initiatives, three Linkages to Learning middle schools challenged preteens and teens interested in “stomping out tobacco” to share facts with schoolmates and surrounding communities.

At Gaithersburg MS, “Tobacco Free Tweens” afterschool club used “Hip Hop” to educate peers and community members about the risks of tobacco. Students developed original expressive performances with the help of BlackRock Center for the Arts, tobacco prevention specialists and Linkages to Learning. The students, joined by their school nurse, Cristie Harhai, RN and



Gaithersburg MS students performing at Westfield Shoppingtown in Wheaton.

MCPS tobacco education specialist Lynn Wiegand, presented to their school's entire 6th grade class. Their community-based performance attracted more than 80 youth and parents at the Month of the Young Child Celebration.

According to Alcira Colon, Linkages site coordinator at Gaithersburg MS from GUIDE Youth Services, “the kids are tapping into their creative physical energy while learning about the dangers of tobacco use.” The group is a “dancing” spin-off of the three-year old Tobacco Free Tweens Theatre Club, another partnership among Community Health Consulting and Linkages at Eastern MS.

For a third year, Tobacco Free Tweens from Eastern performed original skits for youngsters at the Silver Spring YMCA's after-school child care program in May, working with a drama specialist. Linkages site coordinator Marlene Woods is working with the school to share the video-taped performance with rising 6th grades during the summer.



Eastern MS students answer the tobacco questions of participants at Silver Spring YMCA after-school program.

At Loiederman MS, students joined with Linkages site coordinator Nikki Feagin and school nurse Lisa Kowalewski to develop tobacco prevention initiatives in their school, focusing on advocacy, support groups and a public information campaign. The “T²” (Tobacco-Free Teens) is a group of 8th grade girls who decided their goal was to speak the truth about the dangers of tobacco to their peers to help save lives. “T²” developed an anti-smoking brochure and a video about preventing smoking in their school, “Keeping It Real About Tobacco,” featuring students from Loiederman sharing facts about smoking prevention.

“These partnerships empower youth to be tobacco experts with their peers and younger children, and counter an image of smoking as being “cool,” observes Wendy Norcross, program director of Community Health Consulting.



Lions Club Sponsors Silver Spring Eye Clinic

The Latino Lions Club (District 22-C) recently sponsored an Eye Clinic for 70 community members at New Hampshire Estates ES. Additional Linkages family and community members were served from Oak View ES, Rolling Terrace ES, Silver Spring International MS, Eastern MS, Argyle MS and Gaithersburg ES.

Lilly Maysonet, Linkages site coordinator at New Hampshire Estates and Oak View, said “It is difficult for struggling families to find these resources. Although our parents often work several jobs, the high cost of housing and living makes it hard to find “extra” money for things like going to the eye doctor or dentist. We are thrilled that the Lion's Club provided this valuable service.”



Bridging Cultures through Yoga

Riti Tyagi found the move from India to Langley Park challenging at first. Tyagi, her husband, and her son moved to the Northwest Apartments in Langley Park because of its convenient location to Broad Acres ES and the College Park campus of University of Maryland, where her husband is pursuing an MBA. "On my first days I felt very lonely. This is a predominantly Hispanic community and I do not speak Spanish, so at first I did not feel like part of a group. I felt as if I had nothing to do and became a little depressed."

"Then I started volunteering at the school, with Ms. Waslow, the Kindergarten teacher. I used to volunteer in India, so I decided to do the same here. I did this for a month," said Tyagi. She credits Ms. Dang, the parent resource coordinator at Broad Acres, for first telling her about Linkages to Learning. "Then I went to a parent involvement meeting and learned more about Linkages English and computer classes," explains Tyagi, "and Emerita (community services aide at Linkages) was the first person I met. "Everything was told so clearly. Most people in the meeting were Spanish speakers, but the parents were warm and it felt like a group. They were good to me, so I signed up for computer and English classes. I did the whole computer program and helped out with the cookbook."



Broad Acres parent, Tyagi, leading a Yoga class.

"Because of Linkages, I became comfortable coming to a new place and meeting parents. I really feel very good here, it's like my home. Everyone is really supportive," said Tyagi.

Her experiences with Linkages convinced Tyagi to expand her involvement with the community. "Veronica Ramirez started the *We Can* nutrition program and the walking group at Linkages' School-Based Health Center. I learned about nutrition, food, health, and exercise in the classes. I also learned of how many moms suffer from many different diseases, diabetes, high blood pressure, and other problems. I myself started suffering from hypothyroid after I had my son, but I do yoga daily. The symptoms have gone away and today I do not need to take medication," notes Tyagi.

"I wanted the moms to have the same benefits from yoga, so I asked Veronica why we don't have a yoga class. Veronica said she was looking for a yoga

instructor. I told her that if the parents are willing to come, I am willing to teach. We started doing yoga only one time a week, but soon we changed it to two times," said Tyagi.

According to Tyagi, the "regulars" who come say they have benefited from yoga. "They say they have lost weight, that they feel more comfortable and have more energy, even the one mother who is anemic," said Tyagi, who has just begun offering yoga for Linkages parents at Harmony Hills ES.

Tyagi believes children can also benefit from a daily regimen and is exploring ideas to introduce classes for children. "It helps them concentrate. Yoga makes you strong from the inside, helps to fight environmental stress and any kind of stress. It makes you strong physically and emotionally."



(L to R) Elena Aguirre, Broad Acres site coordinator, in a borrowed sari, with Riti Tyagi at the Mothers Empowerment Tea.

Families Benefit with Food, Fitness and Fun

"Food, Fitness and Fun," a pilot obesity prevention program at Summit Hall and Viers Mill Elementary Schools, helped 35 children and their parents increase physical activity while improving their nutritional knowledge and food choices.

The program was a result of a collaboration between the American Institutes for Research (AIR), the Department of Health and Human Services School Health Services and Linkages to Learning. Most parents reported their family changed their diet after the 8-week program and noticed their child's increased level of physical activity. Some parents observed that a number of their children even lost weight!

Parents of overweight children in particular believed their child exhibited increased self-esteem and confidence while interacting with peers. Parents hope the program will continue, noting the absence of similar programs in the school and surrounding communities. The collaboration is seeking funding opportunities to sustain and expand the program.



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A Wider Circle Embraces Linkages Families

This year, many Linkages communities are partnering with *A Wider Circle*, a Bethesda-based nonprofit, to help empower Montgomery County parents. The collaboration began when Mark Bergel, *A Wider Circle*'s executive director and a therapist, met with Linkages administrative staff last fall to brainstorm strategies for the groups to work together.

Summit Hall's Linkages team was interested in *A Wider Circle*'s services and initiated a series of wellness workshops for their Mothers Educational Group. In the "Stress Management" workshop, Bergel introduced parents to relaxation and breathing techniques and helped them learn to use humor to manage stressful situations.

A second workshop focused on healthy eating, with participants focusing on the connection between nutrition and personal well-being. Using fruits and a blender, Bergel taught participants to prepare a tasty and nutritious fruit-shake.

A Wider Circle is sharing tools for Summit Hall's gardening workshop this spring. Parents are purchasing landscaping materials with proceeds from a Linkages



Mark Bergel, executive director with *A Wider Circle*, leads workshop.

parent-led fundraiser at Summit Hall's Spring Fair. Future workshops are planned to highlight the "Mind-Body Connection" and "Creativity and Self-esteem."

Ana Schmitz, site coordinator at Summit Hall ES believes "*A Wider Circle* workshops fit perfectly with our empowerment model, focusing on the strengths of our parents to build a healthier and more productive community. And Mark even speaks some Spanish, so that's really helpful too. We are really thrilled with the opportunity to work together."

Besides the educational activities, *A Wider Circle* has assisted Linkages families from at least a dozen school communities in meeting needs for furniture and household goods.

Haifa Peter, clinical supervisor, notes "It's great to have the resources provided by *A Wider Circle*. They have a storage facility and everything our parents need—baby equipment and clothing for infants and expecting moms can be very hard to find."

According to Bergel, "Just the other day, I had four social service providers here from Linkages schools picking up donations given by our supporters."

Bergel, who notes his organization hopes to expand to serve additional Linkages schools, said "Recently we did our first workshop at Rolling Terrace, and their parents were a joy to work with as well. I look forward to going back!"

"We love working with Linkages because they're so dedicated to serving their clients. That makes it more satisfying for us- to know our efforts go directly to helping these families in need," said Bergel, concluding, "Our partnership epitomizes what's needed to help families create stable and independent lives."

First Book and Borders Books & Music Support Family Literacy



This March, First Book, a nonprofit organization with a mission to give children from low-income families the opportunity to read and own their first new books, celebrated Dr. Suess's 102nd birthday at Borders Books & Music in White Flint Mall. Linkages, along with three other Montgomery County nonprofits, was awarded a \$500 Border's gift certificate to purchase new books for its children through Montgomery County's First Book Advisory Board.

Harry Lugenbeel, co-chair of the Advisory Board and a representative of the Montgomery Village Kiwanis Club thanked Borders and its customers for their generous holiday giving. "You have joined with First Book to infuse our community with many new books, helping hundreds of deserving children celebrate reading," said Lugenbeel.

Judy Jenik, Linkages to Learning site coordinator at Viers Mill ES and Harmony Hills ES and Dr. Paul Scott, MCPS coordinator for Linkages, accepted the award on behalf of Linkages families.



L to R: Judy Jenik, Sharon Strauss, Daniel Fromme (Borders), Harry Lugenbeel, Pat Pope (First Book) and Paul Scott with the Hernandez and Quito families.

Building Skills through the Arts

Many Linkages professionals are finding that integrating arts-based programs enhances students and parents social, educational and mental well-being. At Greencastle ES, a Montgomery County Community Foundation grant to Create Arts Center in Silver-Spring enabled the nonprofit to work with Linkages and the school to serve students in Create's afternoon arts enrichment program.

Create's founder and director, Tamar Hendel, believes "There's no right or wrong ways of doing art, and students participate willingly. Freedom to make artistic choices and voice one's own ideas develops independence and strengthens student's self-confidence," said Hendel. "Our goal is to develop these skills in Greencastle students who otherwise wouldn't participate because of financial reasons, or who may experience other difficulties. Linkages asks teachers to suggest children who might especially benefit and serves as Create's liaison," said Hendel, reporting "the help Linkages provides to make things work in the school is very important."

Nicki Sanders, Linkages site coordinator at Greencastle, has found children and parents are pleased with the special opportunity. "Last semester, they

created their own dolls as well as clothing and houses. Parents came to their exhibit, and the kids were really proud," notes Sanders. "And teachers and our principal seem pleased too. We hope to continue the program next year," said Sanders.

Elena Padua, former mental health intern at Summit Hall, describes how Linkages Dance Club program has supported several students. "One student had difficulty both in social interaction and in controlling tics," said Padua.

"After joining Linkages Dance Club, the child gained confidence in his interpersonal relationships while acquiring skills for gross and fine motor control," said Padua. Padua observed that the child, who initially roamed the room during

instruction and spoke out of turn, now remains quiet, follows directions, and actively participates in dance routines. Padua notes that for students who feel he or she cannot do anything well, "The Dance Club helps them gradually gain confidence and self-esteem, two factors vital to good mental health."

At Highland ES, Linkages AmeriCorps member Erica Tokar engaged parents in her ESL class with Color Me Mine Studio in Silver Spring in a language-rich "tea-cup" activity.

Class members mastered vocabulary describing positions and directions along with names of dishes and utensils while they hand-painted "Tea Cups" for Linkages Mothers Empowerment Tea. Olney Brownie Troop #3406 later filled with the cups with flowers they donated.

"Combining the painting with our lesson was very exciting for them. They were so proud of their work and happy to give back to Linkages too," said Tokar.



Summit Hall ES students dancing at Travilah ES

Dancing for a Sister School

This year's "Cinco de Mayo" celebration had an authentic flare as Summit Hall's Dance Club, led by Linkages parents, performed six Latin American dances for the Travilah ES community. Travilah ES invited the Dance Club's thirty-five students to perform at their school-wide assembly and arranged transportation for the Summit Hall group.

The performance was facilitated by the two schools' long-time sister school partnership. An appreciative Travilah audience of students, teachers and parents has already invited students to return next year! The Dance Club, a Linkages and Kids First Alliance sponsored program, has become a popular draw for many Montgomery County events.



Latino Health Initiative Launches Gaithersburg Asthma Prevention Program

Although asthma affects all children, low-income children and children who belong to racial minority groups experience substantially higher rates of fatalities, hospital admissions, and emergency room visits due to asthma.

Children with asthma often miss school due to asthma related illness, medical appointments, and hospitalization. And parents miss work, reducing family self-sufficiency, since many work in jobs that don't offer paid leave.

To help Montgomery's low-income Latino families overcome these problems and increase understanding of asthma management, Montgomery County's Latino Health Initiative developed and implemented culturally competent interventions through a grant from Maryland's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Center for Maternal and Child Health.

This year, Latino Health Initiative partnered with Linkages and school nurses at Summit Hall ES, Washington Grove ES, Gaithersburg ES and Rosemont ES as sites for the first phase of the three year grant.

Nurses identified children whose parents might benefit most from the program, based at Summit Hall ES. Linkages staff reached out and engaged parents as participants in the 11 session program, which integrated multimedia presentations, anatomical models and games, as well as role-playing and dialogue.

Besides learning about asthma management and medications, parents worked to resolve barriers and learned how to communicate effectively with the school and health care providers.

Coaches also conducted telephone interventions with parents to identify possible problems, and supported families through encouragement and referrals to services.

"We believe the program empowers parents to help their children manage asthma by increasing their knowledge and skills," said nurse administrator Irm Pichot, who oversees Linkages health services.

Sonia Mora, program manager with the Latino Health Initiative and the Department of Health and Human Services notes "Our long-term goal is to reduce emergency department visits and hospitalization rates of Latino children living in Montgomery County. We are excited about working with Linkages to Learning and School Health Services to expand the program to new areas of the County next year."



(continued from p. 1)

According to Linkages therapeutic recreation counselor Linn Rivera who facilitated one of the groups, "Even though the women came from many different cultures and backgrounds, they shared experiences, worked together and supported one another."

The "Life Is a Journey" theme was reflected in the activities in the two day program. Rivera noted the program included personal reflections, team building, nature walks and a mask-making art activity, as well as massages and a dip in the hot tub for willing participants.



"The guided imagery technique allowed mothers to imagine a journey. Each mother had to identify something they wanted to keep, and each had to find another thing they wished to give to another person," said Rivera. "Not surprisingly, they wished to keep items like photographs or something personal connected to their family. This really helps them focus on their own values and priorities," observes Rivera.

Case manager Toula Candenedo from Maryvale ES and leader of the school's Latino mothers group attended the retreat and found, "some of our mothers have made amazing changes since last year. It was really gratifying for me, because it showed me that Linkages services help our mothers grow," concludes Candenedo.



4th Annual Mothers Empowerment Tea Celebrates Literacy

Linkages to Learning's Fourth Annual Mother's Empowerment Tea on April 24 at Rockville's Glenview Mansion featured fabulous weather, crafts made by Linkages moms, beautifully illustrated children's books, and compelling speakers. Linkages friends enjoyed delicious hors d'oeuvres and desserts prepared by Linkages mothers with Through the Kitchen Door as well as refreshing Honest Tea beverages.

The crowd of 200 guests was entertained by a string ensemble from Blair High School, and seventy-five generous donors assured there was something for everyone at the Silent Auction, with items ranging from restaurant gift cards to salon gift certificates to the coveted "Aqualung" gold-record. This year's Tea highlighted the role of literacy in empowering Linkages families, a theme echoed throughout the program.

An array of items were created by Linkages mothers, including "Tea Cups" hand-painted by mothers of Highland Elementary's adult ESL class. There were unique pins, necklaces, earrings, key chains and book marks made by Silver Spring mothers in collaboration with Kensington artist Gary Rosenthal. A cookbook, produced by mothers participating in Broad Acres Elementary School's Computer Literacy Group, was filled with recipes contributed by Linkages families and friends and was illustrated by Linkages children from Maryvale and Harmony Hills.

Carolyn Colvin, director of the county's Department of Health and Human Services, representing County Executive Doug Duncan, spoke about Linkages' history and its meaning to county residents. She introduced Congressman Chris Van Hollen, who noted the important role immigrants play in Montgomery County's rich social and economic life. He also condemned Congressional legislation that would make being an undocumented immigrant a felony.

Representative Van Hollen then introduced his colleague Congresswoman Linda Sánchez of California, who described growing up as

one of seven children of immigrant parents. She detailed her mother's ambition to learn English and her eventual career teaching English to speakers of other languages. Sánchez stressed the value of early education and support services in establishing strong families and communities. Sánchez remarked that especially for poor immigrant children, school-based services like Linkages to Learning can "give children an equal footing so they can compete on a level playing field."

Councilmember Steve Silverman urged Linkages to Learning advocates to assure that "Equal opportunity and justice are not academic theory or dreams, but a tangible commitment valuing the voice, richness and experience of every person in our community, empowering those in need to become successful community members."

Silverman noted "today's immigrants are engaged in overcoming the same barriers experienced by my own grandparents, who were trying to make a better life for their families," and praised Linkages efforts to help parents develop the resources to become "confident role models, successful breadwinners, enlightened educators and helpful neighbors."

Silver Spring author and illustrator Lulu Delacre was honored at the event for leading literacy programs for Linkages families. Delacre charmed the audience by singing one of the nursery rhymes from her book, *Arrorro Mi Niño: Latino Lullabies and Gentle Games*.

Delacre described the importance of literacy and the intimate connections reading forges between parents and children, noting it was also important "to help parents share their stories with their children, so they could cherish their memories and culture."



Councilmember Mike Subin, with Linkages coordinator Ilene Sparber, was the winning bidder of an original Delacre watercolor.

Delacre further broadened her support of Linkages through her generous donation of an original illustration for the auction as well as by personally inscribing books for guests.

Council member Mike Subin, a founder and long-time supporter of Linkages to Learning, acknowledged the value of collaboration by Linkages many partners and likened his leadership of Linkages to that of General Eisenhower, who prepared two memos before an impending battle, one which he personally accepted responsibility in the event of a failure, and another which credited the battle's success to the soldiers and commanders in the trenches. Subin then hailed Linkages staff members, partners and community members for their invaluable work.

The program concluded with a poem written by Suzzette Crawford, a single mother of four children and Jamaican immigrant who is also hearing impaired. Crawford, originally inspired by her son's homework assignment, continued writing with the encouragement of her children and Karen McNally, Linkages site coordinator at Argyle MS. At Crawford's request, Carol Binta Nadeem, site coordinator at Maryvale ES, concluded the program by reading Crawford's poem, "*Chocolate Éclair*."

4th Annual Mothers Empowerment Tea Unites Linkages Friends



Linkages friends and supporters, L to R.: (top) Staff members Andrea Barrera (Silver Spring International MS) and Toulia Candanedo (Maryvale ES) selling Linkages Jewels; Staff Xiomara Pacheco-Zarate (Summit Hall ES) and Teresa Wright (MCPS), Guests peruse Silent Auction items. Councilmembers Steve Silverman and Mike Subin; Blair HS's string and piano group entertains, Congressman Chris Van Hollen greets PTA leaders Debbi Missal and Terri Salus. Linkages coordinator Ilene Sparber (DHHS) with Keynote speaker Congresswoman Linda Sánchez, Kim Powell (Pinecrest ES & Montgomery Knolls) with parent Gloria Rocha (Through the Kitchen Door); Carolyn Colvin; director of Montgomery County DHHS. Author and illustrator Lulu Delacre; Linkages coordinator (MCPS) Paul Scott with Ike Leggett; League of Women Voters supporters Pat Plunkett and Betty Baldwin; Americorps members Carmela Gomez and Erica Tokar.

MCPS Reflections on Linkages

It's no secret that for Linkages to Learning and other providers of school-based services, the active support of principals, guidance counselors, teachers and support staff is essential in making the program a success.

Facilitating that support is the responsibility of each Linkages professional and the Linkages Resource Team. Former principal Paul Scott, Linkages MCPS coordinator, promotes the partnership, assuring Linkages to Learning and MCPS work effectively in meeting the complex needs of students, families and communities.

Scott notes "A body of research points out that leadership is key in making these relationships work, just like other aspects of school administration. Along with that, it's a two way street for our Linkages professionals. Although they're located in school facilities, they're not employed by MCPS and they report to another agency and the Linkages collaboration. But they have to be sensitive to the culture of schools. Linkages' best staff have great people skills and know how to use resources from many systems," said Scott.

Thanks to our Sponsors, Donors and Friends for their Support!

In-Kind Supporters:

The City of Rockville and the Glenview Mansion; Whole Foods Market; Honest Tea; Through the Kitchen Door; The Gazette Newspaper; Montgomery County Dept. of Health & Human Services; American Plant Food Co.; Charlotte Fremaux; Blair HS Music Department

Platinum Sponsors:

American Institute for Research; Kids First Alliance; M & T Bank; Potomac Ridge Behavioral Health; Trawick & Associates.

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Barbara Newland; Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth & Families; Mental Health Association of Montgomery County.

Silver Sponsors:

Alpha Kappa Alpha, Theta Omega Omega Chapter; Linna Barnes; Shirley Brandman; Goldene and Herschel Blumberg; Frontier Tax; Carol Garvey; Candace Kattar; Judith Madden; Patti Morgan; Janice McCall; Daniel Parr; ; Provident Bank; Rathbone & Associates; Joan Stanley; YMCA Youth & Family Services, a branch of the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington; Edith Williams, and to all of our friends.

Fortunately, the Linkages collaboration seems to be well-appreciated. Although there can be wrinkles, "schools tend to be very vocal in supporting Linkages services," said Scott, noting "Even with our continuing expansion, we have a way to go before we meet demand."

At **Highland ES** in Wheaton, a Linkages school since 1993, Guidance Counselor Courtney Thompson believes "Linkages services are vital to have in our building. Our families really count on the social services and Linkages to Learning really helps our families feel connected to the school. The needs seem to be growing, so it's critical to make sure we have as many resources as possible."

According to Sharon Jones, principal at **Gaithersburg ES**, home of Linkages to Learning's newest school-based health centers, "All of the services are greatly needed by the families we serve. Adding the comprehensive health services with primary care added the missing piece of the puzzle and is invaluable. I'm so proud to take parents to see our center. Our entire school community has bought into the idea that taking care of the whole child is important. I wish every school could have one," said Jones.

Auction Donors: Ann E. Lane Interiors; A-Plus Tutoring; Accessible Beltway Clinics & Dr. John Rosa; AFI Silver Theatre & Cultural Center; Arena Stage; As Kindred Spirits; Austin Grill, Bethesda; Barrera's Autoglass; B.D.'s Mongolian Grill; Ben & Jerry's Scoop Shops; Best Shear's Inc.; The BlackRock Center for the Arts; Bonefish Grill; The Capitol Steps; California Tortilla, Rockville; Carribean Feast Restaurant; Catch Can Boutique; Catherine Alvarez; Valerie Ciemielewski & Mary Kay Cosmetics; Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at U. of Maryland; Color Me Mine, Silver Spring; Cong. Chris Van Hollen; The Container Store; County Executive Doug Duncan; & the Montgomery County Council; Create Arts Center; The David Letterman Show; David's Beautiful People; El Andariego Restaurant; El Tipico Restaurant; Flagship Car Wash; Friends of the National Zoo; Gaithersburg Marriott, Washington Center; Lynne and Jeffrey Ganek; Gifford's Ice Cream, Bethesda; Gretchen Everett; The Hair Cuttery; Imagination Stage; Johnson's Florist & Garden Ctrs.; Kammerman Portraits; Linkages Staff and Friends; Lulu Delacre; Merry Maids, Silver Spring; Mi Rancho Restaurant; Mon Ami Gabi Restaurant; National Museum for Women in the Arts; The National Philharmonic Orchestra; Normandie Farms; O'Hair Salon and Spa; Olney Grille; Olney Theater Center for the Arts; Profiles Hair Studio; Progressions Salon & Spa Store; The Reading Doctor; Rika Granger; Ridgewells Catering; Round House Theatre; Silver Stars Gymnastics & Kids' Athletic Club; Strathmore Hall; Strosnider's Hardware, Bethesda; Thrive Yoga; Pauline Yenason of Stephen Anthony Salon.



Thanks to our Donors and Community Partners



Dr. Adam Schneider and staff, for providing in-kind dental services to 15 children from Gaithersburg ES and Gaithersburg MS.

Gerry Rosenkrantz and Project Reboot volunteers and supporters, for donating dozens of computers to Linkages families.

John Ahern of Mattress Warehouse, for providing a significant contribution for 12 beds to families from Maryvale ES, Washington Grove ES and Gaithersburg MS.

Pam Hughes and Wyngate ES students and PTA's WE-Care Group, for donating playground toys and soccer shoes to Linkages children.

Jody Gan and North Chevy Chase PTA, for donating a van of food to Wheaton Woods ES families.

Rockville North's Moms Club, for a "household linens" drive for Wheaton Woods ES families.

St. Mark's Orthodox Church, for donating food baskets to Wheaton Woods ES families.

Ilene Sherwood, for donating a household of furniture to 3 Summit Hall ES families.

St. Jane de Chantal School, for donating school supplies to Parkland MS and Loiederman MS students.

The Belangers, for donating furniture to Rolling Terrace ES families.

Paul Gagnon, for donating furniture to Rolling Terrace ES families.

Robert Dorsof, for donating furniture to Rolling Terrace ES families.

Lisa Dominguez, for donating maternity clothes to Rolling Terrace ES families.

Joanne Baker, for donating baby clothes and high chair to Rolling Terrace ES families.

Lakewood ES 3rd graders, for donating books to Georgian Forest ES in honor of their teacher, Ms. Kim.

Amy Ross and B-CC HS PTSA, for donating "lost and found" coats to Linkages teens.

Montgomery Knolls ES Title I Knitting Guild, for donating sweaters and hats to Montgomery Knolls ES students.

Scott McKenzie, PTA; Deeann Collins, principal and Vince Fazzalare, assistant principal Montgomery Knolls ES; Meredith Caspar, principal, Pine Crest ES; Lan Nguyen, MCPS Parent Coordinator; Sonia Rodriguez, Long Branch Sr. Center; the Latino Health Initiative; Carlos Soles with OMHRC; Margarita Rozenfeld; for presenting at Linkages morning coffee.

Christine Elrod, for leading a computer class and **YMCA Horizons Program**, for leading a Bullying Program for Pine Crest ES and Montgomery Knolls ES families.

Robert Seubert, White Oak MS and The Knights of Columbus, Father Rosensteel Council #2169, for a donation to meet family emergency needs at Broad Acres ES.

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The Mental Health Association's Multi-cultural Mental Health Initiative, Citibank and the Center for Financial Education, The FAETH Center, Comfort Attachou, Christine Mattis-Myrie, Barbara Johnson, Rob Guttenberg (YMCA), Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, MC Fire & Rescue Services, Tutor Find, Cedar Ridge Community Church, MC Dept. of Rec, MCPS PITC, Community Action Agency, Belle Etiquette & Charm, Dream Dinners, Share Food Network, Community Action Agency, Eastern MC Regional Services Center, Kimberly Richardson, Carlisle Sealy, WHUR FM, Wood & Charissa McCall, Woody Wood Productions, Vance Rego, FYE Westfield Shoppingtown, Wheaton and Target (Wheaton), Members of DC SistaGirls (DCSG), Titra G. Hamilton, Shawone Moore, Mr. and Mrs. El-Asmar, and Mrs. Cardarelli, for presenting workshops for Greencastle ES and Banneker MS families.

Thanks to all of Linkages to Learning friends for your support. We apologize for any inadvertent admissions.



***UpCounty mothers and young children with Linkages staff.
(story on p. 1)***

Bat Mitzvah's Baskets Bring Smiles

Many Linkages friends share the joy of a special occasion by making a meaningful donation to help Linkages families. Kensington resident Abby Frank marked the passage of her Bat Mitzvah by creating "baby baskets" as table centerpieces for her party. Abby's baskets included newborn clothing, toys, blankets, and accessories. Abby plans to continue her community service by organizing a "diaper drive."



*Silver Spring International MS mom
Antonia Montilla with new baby.*

Colleen Fee Joins Linkages Resource Team as Nonprofit Representative



Colleen Fee joined the Linkages to Learning Resource Team as the non-profit partner representative in April, replacing Vivian Yao. After five dedicated years with Linkages, Yao moved to the County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs as a manager for the Federal Community Development Block Grant program.

A social worker with expertise in anti-poverty and child welfare programs, Fee's expertise as an advocate, fundraiser, strategic planner, program developer, and evaluator is already proving invaluable.

Fee's last position was Chief of Program Planning and Evaluation with Charles County Human Services Partnership, an agency that functions as Charles County's Local Management Board and Core Services Agency.

Most recently, she's been at home in Silver Spring with her children while serving as a parent representative on Montgomery County's Commission on Children and Youth. Fee is employed by the Mental Health Association of Montgomery County, one of Linkages service providers.

A Warm Welcome to our New Staff

Caron Cox-Branch, mental health counselor, Wheaton Woods ES & Highland ES

Daniel Beltran, case manager, Parkland MS

Jamell Barbee, site coordinator, Wheaton Woods ES

Eveling Rodriguez, case manager, Pine Crest ES & Montgomery Knolls ES

Monica Lozano, mental health counselor, Eastern MS

Katya Miranda, case manager, New Hampshire Estates ES & Oak View ES

Jamie Wilson, mental health counselor, Kennedy Cluster

Karen Cooper, mental health counselor, Kennedy Cluster

Dinandrea Vega, mental health counselor, Broad Acres

Amanda Bobrow, mental health counselor, Parkland MS

Catherine Dooley, community service aide, Parkland MS & Loiederman MS

Denya Wilson, site coordinator at Weller Road ES

Sayira Ball, case manager, Weller Road ES

Nancy Lazo, site coordinator, Harmony Hills ES & Viers Mill ES

Rene Sours, mental health counselor, Loiederman MS



...and a Fond Farewell to Former Colleagues:

Lori Herringa, site coordinator, Wheaton Woods ES

Ricardo Padmore, case manager, New Hampshire Estates ES & Oak View ES

Kimberly Collins, mental health counselor, Washington Grove ES & Forest Oak MS



Douglas M. Duncan, County Executive
Montgomery County, Maryland

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Alternative formats available

Lowe's & First Book Sponsor Family Literacy Events at Eastern MS



At Eastern MS, Linkages to Learning has extended its summer family literacy nights to all year, thanks to Lowe's Toolbox for Education and Eastern MS PTA! This spring, teacher David Taylor Nielsen made a special appearance as the Cat in the Hat for "Dr. Seuss's Birthday," and a First Book National Book Bank distribution made it possible for each family to bring home new Seuss books. Principal Charlotte Boucher, (pictured on the right), participated as a guest reader during "Poetry Night," helping families to get to know her in a different way. Families also created their own poems. Many Linkages sites will be offering similar family literacy programs this summer.



TOOLBOX
FOR EDUCATION **LOWE'S**